

SHARING PERSPECTIVES ON CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

December 10-15, 2002

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FINAL REPORT

SHARING PERSPECTIVES ON CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

December 10-15, 2002
Kabul, Afghanistan

A Workshop Hosted by the Ministry of Education of Afghanistan, the
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Executive Summary

The transitional government and the Afghan people, together with the donor community and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), are now taking active steps to rebuild the education system in Afghanistan. The Sharing Perspectives on Curriculum Development in Afghanistan workshop addressed issues of curriculum development as an integral part of building a new Afghanistan. The workshop yielded important results, including recommendations for the Ministry of Education (MOE) on the proposed new curriculum framework. Some key points of agreement established during the workshop include:

- Support the goal of education, as stated by Minister of Education Qanooni, to bring up a generation of Afghans who will be good Muslims, patriotic and unified across ethnic and religious lines, progressive and respectful of human rights and cooperative members of the world community.
- Build on national and international experiences in curriculum development and meet regional and international standards, while maintaining a compatibility with the values and needs of Afghan society. Crucial local concerns are economic resources, as well as the context and conditions specific to Afghanistan.
- Support anti-terrorism and anti-drug policy goals, which can be achieved, in part, by returning to the traditional respect and value for education inherent in Afghan culture.
- Base the curriculum on a spiral or integrated system in which students revisit concepts at several different grade levels.
- Identify specific learning objectives for each subject in addition to having a general education curriculum.
- Teach national unity throughout the curriculum.
- Share the framework with the provinces for further review with educational professionals, teachers, school leadership personnel, students, parents and community members.
- Edit thoroughly the Dari version of the framework with attention to word choice and style, and translate the framework into Pashto.

Significant momentum is in place to produce this new curriculum, but the rush to fast-track curriculum implementation can adversely affect the quality of the curriculum.

Those taking next steps in this process must strongly consider:

- A realistic timeline to, first and foremost, develop the capacity of implementers to understand the depth and breadth of the core concepts of the new curriculum framework. In the process of curriculum development, time must be allowed for planning, development, formative evaluation and revision.
- The provision of capacity training and financial, human and material resources.
- The creation or enhancement of systems and infrastructures that incorporate necessary quality control measures.
- The influence curriculum developers have on the classroom through the instructional materials they develop.
- The development of standards and competencies to improve the quality of the curriculum by identifying milestones that align the study plan, syllabi, instructional materials and assessments, increasing the validity of measures in

- learner outcomes and achievement as learners advance through the curriculum.
- Given that curriculum development and teacher training are coordinated by two separate ministries, close collaboration is required to produce teachers that understand, embrace and practice the new curriculum in the classroom.

The challenges are many, but the opportunity of today is equally as great. Textbooks exist and are currently in use around the country; therefore, there is time to give this process of new curriculum development the needed patience and diligence. Afghanistan has educators who bring exceptional experience and dedication to this task, both those currently in the country and those that continue to return from exile, emboldened by an abiding hope, as well as passionate about rebuilding the education system. Among parents and communities, support is burgeoning for the schooling of their children. The thirst for education is strong and the resolve to build a new curriculum for a new Afghanistan is firm.

Final Report
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I. Background

Over the past 23 years, Afghanistan has sustained a series of devastating events. Invasion and occupation, civil war, and repressive regimes severely limited access to education for all, with girls and women categorically denied the opportunity for education under the five-year Taliban rule. Although there has never been a complete or accurate national census and estimates of key development indicators vary widely, according to the best estimates in 1997, school enrollment was estimated at 34 percent in urban areas, and only 6 percent in rural areas. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reports the literacy rate in Afghanistan as the sixth lowest in the world, with only 4.7 percent of females over the age of 15 able to read. While political repression and fighting have deprived more than a generation of Afghans of even a basic education, the Afghan people have embraced a rebirth of education since the fall of the Taliban regime, especially among women and girls. Students returned to schools in record numbers in 2002 even in the face of the destruction of over 70 percent of the nation’s school buildings.

Afghanistan’s education system should be rehabilitated and modernized through careful, culturally sensitive, long-term efforts while the transitional government continues to find shorter-term solutions for the lack of school buildings, trained and qualified teachers, and instructional materials. During the past months, great strides have been made to reinvigorate the Afghan education system and begin work on a new curriculum framework. As part of this effort, a commission made up of 30 MOE staff, Kabul University professors and representatives of UNICEF and UNESCO traveled to Tehran, Iran to participate in a three-week investigation of curriculum in the Iranian school system. After this informative study tour, the MOE was interested in continuing the process of curriculum development and dialogue through a workshop focused on curriculum development. This workshop, Sharing Perspectives on Curriculum Development in Afghanistan, was conceived of as a forum for soliciting feedback and stimulating dialogue on the development of a new curriculum. During the workshop, the MOE presented the draft curriculum framework and the team of facilitators structured questions in order to systematically review different components of the curriculum framework. The forum gave participants an opportunity to actively share their ideas and to engage in debate and dialogue around issues of curriculum for a new Afghanistan.

II. Workshop Objectives, Participants and Organizers

A. Objectives

The primary objective of the Sharing Perspectives on Curriculum Development workshop was to promote dialogue on the proposed new curriculum framework for the Afghan

education system. An intended result of this dialogue was to develop recommendations and thus build consensus on the new curriculum framework. A second objective of the workshop was to identify and discuss educational approaches, potential strategies and mechanisms that could be applied in curriculum development and implementation, which was to result in a guide to future steps to be taken by the MOE's Department of Compilation and Translation and other stakeholders.

B. Participants

Twenty-nine organizations in total participated in the workshop. One hundred twenty-three participants, among them 22 women, included staff from the MOE, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), the Ministry of Information and Culture, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Kabul University, various Kabul schools, USAID, UNICEF, UNESCO, World Food Programme, the UN Programme Secretariat, and various NGOs, including: the Agha Khan Development Network, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Children in Crisis, Creative Associates International, Inc., Educational Concepts International, the International Rescue Committee, Norwegian Afghanistan Committee, Save the Children, Solidarité Afghanistan Belgium, the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, University of Nebraska/ARRENA, and various other institutions and news agencies. Annex A contains a complete list of all conference participants and their organizational affiliations. Annex B displays the workshop invitation.

C. Organizers

Creative Associates International Inc. (CAII), through its USAID-funded Basic Education Policy Support (BEPS) activity, teamed with USAID and the MOE to conduct this five-day curriculum development workshop for Afghanistan. CAII provided the venue, logistical, organizational and conceptual support, two of the conference facilitators, Dr. Eileen St. George and Dr. Seddiq Weera, and prepared the final report. The conceptual design of the conference was developed in concert with USAID, the MOE, the UN Program Secretariat, UNICEF and UNESCO. In addition to this final report, CAII prepared a midterm briefing report summarizing the proceedings from the first three days of the workshop for the use of Minister of Education Qanooni and his staff as they traveled to a regional UNESCO meeting in Paris, France.

III. Workshop Topics for Discussion and Conference Schedule

A. Key Topics for Discussion

- Educational approaches presented in the new curriculum framework.
- Chapters 1-10 of the new curriculum framework.
- Potential strategies and mechanisms that can be applied in the future of curriculum development and implementation.
- Recommendations for next steps in the curriculum development and implementation process.

B. Conference Schedule

See Annex C.

C. Methodology

The first day of the conference was devoted to plenary sessions in which speakers and participants presented an overview of the situational analysis in Afghanistan, curriculum reform in a broader context and a summary of the proposed new curriculum framework (See Annexes D, E and F for PowerPoint presentations on Evaluating Curriculum, Syllabi and Assessment, and Summary of Feedback respectively). On the second, third and fourth days of the conference, participants met in small working groups to discuss the curriculum framework, guided by a series of questions, then reported key points to the plenary assembly. The conference organizers worked to compose small groups with a balanced mix of participants. Women were placed throughout the groups, as were representatives of NGOs, MOE, MOHE and teachers. The fifth and final day brought participants together to summarize recommendations, continue considering next steps and listen to closing comments. Guidelines for group work distributed to participants appear in Annex G and a complete set of review questions used in small groups is contained in Annex H.

IV. Key Speakers and Opening Discussion: Current Context of Education in Afghanistan

After a reading from the Holy Qu'ran, local newscaster and teacher Ms. Najiba Sharif welcomed the participants and introduced each speaker:

- Deputy Minister of Education Zabiullah Asmati reported on achievements in education in the past six months. Mr. Asmati praised Minister of Education Mohamad Yunus Qanooni for securing international assistance that enabled the MOE to publish and distribute textbooks.
- Minister Qanooni followed with remarks about improving education, emphasizing that education and educational institutions were severely damaged or destroyed during 23 years of war in Afghanistan. New curriculum programs will be introduced not only in Kabul, but in all the provinces of the country. With the help of donors and international institutions, educational facilities will be provided for 3 million children, and books, chairs, tables and other necessities will be available to schools across the country.
- In his remarks, Minister of Information and Culture Makhduom Raheen emphasized Islamic teachings about compassion towards humans as well as animals. Minister Raheen suggested, as part of the rehabilitation of education in Afghanistan, eliminating the tradition of violence and guns from the Afghan culture. Minister Raheen also stressed the role of art, music and sports in children's development.
- USAID Mission Director Craig Buck expressed support for the new Afghan education policy efforts and reaffirmed the support of the U.S. government.
- Mr. Waheed Hassan, of the UN Programme Secretariat and UNICEF, reinforced the continuing support of UNICEF for the Afghan education sector and offered a series of questions to consider in developing a new curriculum for Afghanistan.
- UNESCO Country Director Ed Burke praised USAID for continuing the process of curriculum development and expressed the continuing support of UNESCO for the rehabilitation of education in Afghanistan.

- Mr. Abdul Nabi Wahidi, Director of the Department of Compilation and Translation at the MOE, presented a detailed historical background of education in Afghanistan, highlighting the role of religious institutions in education. Mr. Wahidi listed the following new features of the proposed curriculum framework:
 - Student-centered versus teacher-centered teaching.
 - A balance of religious and secular subjects.
 - Inclusion of foreign languages and vocational training in primary education.
 - Establishment of four cycles consisting of three years each (grades 1-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12).
 - Division into a two-track system for grades 10-12, one in social studies and the other in natural sciences.
 - A change from traditional examination and grading to evaluation based on competencies and learning outcomes.
 - Establishment of guidance and counseling committees in schools.
 - Development of content that reflects education policy.
- Comments from the audience emphasized the need for financial support, time and other resources in order to implement this curriculum. The crucial role of both teacher training and school construction was also stressed by participants. The audience offered the following concerns and suggestions:
 - The curriculum should be based on Islamic principles.
 - Diplomas should not merely be a means for escape from the country. Job opportunities should be made available for students upon graduation.
 - National unity should be taught to students.
 - Primary education should be compulsory and free.
 - The needs of the country should be considered in training students.
 - Students should be placed in courses of study depending on their interests.
 - The curriculum should be built as a spiral system.
 - Guidance and counseling play an important role in responding to the needs of students and enhancing their learning potential.
 - The teacher profile should not be that of a military officer, but rather a kind, considerate person who offers opportunities for asking questions in the classroom.

V. Recommendations on Proposed New Curriculum Framework

This chapter contains a summary of participant feedback and recommendations from the five days of the workshop. Comments from participants during the plenary session on evaluating the curriculum focused on:

- Making objectives clear in the curriculum from the primary level up to higher levels and evaluating the curriculum after each semester to ensure better results.
- Meeting the needs of students, fitting the present conditions in Afghanistan and \ applying and implementing strategies within a specific period of time.
- Considering on whom the curriculum should focus—the student rather than the teacher.

A. Participant Feedback

General Perception of the New Curriculum Framework:

- Overall views were positive, while noting some recommendations for revision.
- The curriculum should go through thorough editing in Dari and be translated into Pashto.
- The curriculum should be shared with provinces and offer provinces a chance for providing feedback.
- The curriculum should be reviewed further with educational professionals, including those in schools as well as parents and communities.
- The curriculum should build on national and international experiences in curriculum development.
- Economic resources, context and conditions of Afghanistan need to be considered.
- The curriculum should be compatible with the values and needs of the Afghan society as well as with regional and international standards.
- Identify specific learning objectives for each subject in addition to having a general education curriculum.
- National unity should be taught and reinforced throughout the curriculum.
- The curriculum should be based on a spiral and integrated system.
- The policy goals of anti-terrorism and anti-drug, while important, are perhaps overemphasized in the policy statement.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Chapter 2: Education Policy (In addition, editorial feedback on selected chapters is contained in Annex I.)

- Priorities should include: providing suitable educational facilities, training teachers, separating education from politics, maintaining a balance in education, observing the rights of children in the education system and placing sufficient emphasis on Islamic studies.
- It is important to teach children to respect others and their beliefs and to promote moral and social responsibility.
- Curriculum development is dynamic; goals and processes change as society changes.
- Political changes should not affect development of an education system.
- Students should be at the center of the teaching and learning process and should be motivated to learn.
- Two identified needs include building the capacity of teachers and improving instructional materials.
- Teacher training centers should be transferred from the purview of the MOHE to the MOE.
- The curriculum should strongly promote lifelong learning to lead the students toward self-sufficiency.
- NGOs should work under the guidance and the umbrella of the MOE.
- Further discussion is needed on mother tongue languages as language of instruction, especially for early primary grades.

- A curriculum for the disabled, including the physically handicapped and the deaf/hard of hearing, needs to be designed and offered under the purview of a vocational or technical department.
- Swift implementation of a new curriculum is suggested, but with a vigilant eye toward preserving and ensuring quality.

Chapter 3: General Objectives and Chapter 4: Education System and Cycle Objectives

- Suggested categories for organizing curriculum goals: scientific and learning goals, dynamic and artistic goals and psychological goals.
- The teaching of foreign languages should be reconsidered with student class load in mind as well as contemporary language acquisition strategies and research.
- High school may be too early to divide students into tracks.
- Education on good citizenship should be added.
- A cycle should build on the cycle that precedes it; a focus on incremental development of skills is important.
- Curriculum should be relevant and applicable to students' daily lives.
- The goals section should also include vocational and technical studies.
- If needed, primary schools can be coeducational, while middle schools and high schools should be single sex.

Chapter 5: Literacy Programmes

- The goal should be the complete eradication of illiteracy.
- Develop an accreditation system to integrate literacy program students into the formal schooling system.
- Promote literacy through media campaigns using television, radios, newspaper and clergy to attract public support.
- Literacy courses can be held in Sunni and Shi'ite mosques, home schools, mobile libraries, etc. and supported through an ongoing task force.
- Literacy programs can be integrated with life skills, agriculture and livestock programs, vocational programs, maternal and child health care programs, programs in family life, customs and practices of the society.
- Teaching materials should be developed on the basis of the learner's age, capacity and occupation.
- Draft literacy program text with contents from the general education system so linkages between systems can be established.
- Literacy programs should be developed for the handicapped.
- Librarians need to be trained.

Chapter 6: Study Plan

- A teacher should have an organized and achievable lesson plan for the students.
- New policy issues, such as human rights, anti-terrorism and anti-drug awareness, promotion of peace and national unity, and health education must be integrated into the curriculum. Some suggestions included incorporating these items into social studies, Islamic studies, foreign languages or ethics. The method of integrating and tracking the effectiveness of these subjects in the curriculum must

be considering in more depth. It is imperative that these subjects are not lost or neglected in the implementation of the curriculum, due to inadequate planning or insufficient preparation of teachers to achieve these goals.

- Physical education, fine arts and music should be given more attention.
- Build in the use of children's literature to teach reading.
- Computers should be part of the curriculum.
- Further discussion is needed on the number of hours appropriate for the study of Arabic, the number of hours of Islamic studies across the grade levels, the number of hours and classes in a school day, the number of hours of science and physics, and the grade levels that include the teaching of drawing and calligraphy.
- In the lower secondary cycle (middle school), agriculture and home economics should be included.
- In upper secondary cycle (high school), general psychology should be taught.
- School schedules must take into account the need for breaks or recesses.
- Kindergarten curriculum and programs need to be incorporated into the MOE.

Chapter 7: Syllabi

- Consider logical scope, sequence and steps for skills development.
- Develop teacher capacity in content and methods to teach according to the syllabi.
- Develop teacher understanding for appropriate student age and level capacities.
- Acquire syllabus samples from other countries in the region.
- Review resource materials critically before they are adopted.
- Establish an art department at the MOE to help with illustrations for materials.
- Objectives should guide the syllabi development and reflect societal needs.
- Syllabi should highlight the use of relevant practical exercises, especially for vocational courses.

Chapter 8: Learning and Teaching Strategies

- The curriculum should facilitate the development of students' creative and analytical thinking skills.
- The classroom should be learner centered, with the teacher serving as a facilitator, helper and guide, enabling students to participate and be motivated.
- Professional, experienced and sympathetic teachers are needed to implement the new education strategy; special attention should be paid to training teachers.
- Teachers should not use corporal punishment.
- It is important to consider setting up schools near the residence of students, especially girls. Household schools or home-schooling programs could be developed for elementary education because often girls and women avoid attending official schools.
- Flexible requirements need to be developed in terms of qualifications for female teachers, especially in rural schools.
- Added strategies, resources and capacity-building efforts may be needed in the rural areas given the current context and situation.

- Parent and community participation in the learning and teaching process is necessary to improve education for girls, student attendance and school performance.
- Students and teachers need access to libraries and resources with practical education materials, and need to be encouraged to use these materials. Box libraries/mobile libraries with books and magazines would increase access to information and encourage reading outside the textbook and independent reading.
- Establish departments for training professional teachers in the areas of vocational and technical education.
- Kindergarten teachers need to receive specialized training.
- Learning contests should be used to create healthy competition among students.

Chapter 9: Assessment and Evaluation of Learning Outcomes

- Use learner outcomes (standards and competencies) to guide the syllabi, instructional materials and the teaching and learning process. These outcomes map the destination and help determine strategies to reach learning goals.
- Assessments should be a learning experience and be used regularly in the classroom to ensure attainment of desired learning.
- The teacher should be trained in different ways of measuring learner outcomes using classroom assessment and examination tools.

Chapter 10: Counseling and Guidance

- While the program is being developed, schools can identify appropriate teachers to assist students in coping with school and home life.
- Schools can establish committees to help support guidance and counseling.

B. Content Area Recommendations

For the breakout discussions on Chapters 7 and 9-10, small groups met according to content area. MOE participants met according to their department affiliation, with NGO representatives and other participants choosing from among those departments, namely Art, Biology/Chemistry, Dari Language, Mathematics, Pashto Language, Physics, Preschool and Literacy, Religious Studies, Social Studies, and Vocational Training. As much of the substantive feedback from these content area groups mirrors what is reported in the feedback on curriculum chapters found above, the editorial comments from each of these groups has been summarized for reference in Annex J.

VI. Recommendations on Planning for Next Steps and Potential Obstacles to Curriculum Framework Goals

For the small group session on planning next steps, participants chose from among the following topics:

- Further Discussion on the Curriculum Framework
- Further Development of Syllabi Objectives
- Development of Instructional Materials
- Establishing Linkages Between the New Curriculum and Teacher Training
- School and Community Engagement in the New Curriculum Reform Process

- Girls' Education
- Preschool and Kindergarten Training

These topical groups presented important policy to action items for consideration, which were also reinforced at other points in the workshop. General recommendations included:

- Requesting through donor assistance: financial support, material and technological resources, technical advisors and sample materials.
- Encouraging experts and skilled people, living abroad in exile, to return and contribute to this process.
- Providing further, in-depth training to build the capacity of curriculum developers, provincial educational officers, teachers, school administrators and others.
- Sharing Dari, Pashto and English versions of the draft framework with provincial education offices and schools, as well as with different sectors of society, e.g., politicians, Islamic scholars, education experts from outside the MOE, members of finance, agriculture, industry and health communities.

Further Discussion on the Curriculum Framework

- The new curriculum is in accordance with the Afghanistan situation/context, but it needs to be edited again to make better sense.
- The curriculum should be discussed in the provinces through workshops such as this one.
- Practical steps are necessary to successfully implement the curriculum.
- The provision of teacher manuals over the short term and incorporating their use over the long term is essential.
- If the MOE provides the materials for this plan, then the process will be accomplished more quickly.

Further Development of Syllabi Objectives

- Specific goals for every subject should be developed, according to the new policy of education.
- Skilled specialists should be trained to develop teaching manuals.
- The governmental press facilities should be upgraded and modernized, e.g., ability to print in color, etc.
- Financial resources for implementing the curriculum should be secured.
- In addition to teaching books, guidebooks for teachers and supplementary materials such as audio-visual materials should be prepared and provided to teachers.
- It should be recognized that the MOE, the MOHE, the Science Academy, experts, professional educators, students, parents and NGOs all play an important role in implementing the new educational curriculum.

Development of Instructional Materials

- One of the most important and useful means for preparing teaching materials is a good library, where teachers can find different kinds of needed books and brochures. Libraries should be developed.
- The MOE, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, should ask foreign countries to assist in preparing syllabi and textbooks with the Compilation and Translation Department.
- Teaching equipment and supplementary materials such as classrooms, tables, chairs, laboratories and printing materials are necessary for teaching.
- Natural and locally available materials should be used for simple experiments and lessons.
- A department of audio-visual materials to prepare the needed equipment and materials should be established.

Establishing Linkages between the New Curriculum and Teacher Training

- Teacher training should be transferred from the purview of the MOHE to the MOE.
- The Scientific Research Center for Pedagogy, the Department of Compilation and Translation, the Department of Science and the Center for Publication should work together.
- Obtaining financial and technical support of international organizations should be done through USAID, UNICEF and UNESCO and the MOE should receive convincing proposals for projects.
- Due to the lack of experts and professionally trained teachers, teacher training and skill building workshops should be held.
- Rebuilding educational infrastructure should be a priority.

School and Community Engagement in the New Curriculum Reform Process

- A session should be held each month with the school administration and parents in which suggestions and opinions can be raised.
- The benefits of the curriculum should be announced through the mass media for all.
- Informational sessions should be organized by school directors and educational boards throughout residential areas in mosques.
- Committees should be created in schools for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing school-community relationships.
- Similar to agricultural cooperatives, special cooperatives should be established to encourage parents to become involved in curriculum development as well as to distribute the food supplements at a low cost.
- Participants' comments during the plenary session revolved around the poor status and pay of teachers. A big problem is that no one wants to become a teacher because of the low status, lack of respect and extremely low compensation. Students see this situation and are certainly not motivated by a desire to become teachers. Mr. Wahidi confirmed the MOE's concern for the well-being of teachers and explained that the MOE is working on a project for

residential houses for teachers. The MOE itself needs resources to be able to plan and carry out this type of program.

Girls' Education

- The barriers towards girls' education are myriad. There are three levels of problems: Girls are not allowed to participate in education by parents. Girls are not retained in schools, i.e. they begin but do not complete education. Girls who complete education do not pursue careers and stay at home after marriage. The high level of illiteracy, the discriminatory attitude of parents and communities towards girls' education, the lack of female teachers and the uneven distribution of female teachers in rural and urban settings are the major factors. Other constraints on girls' education include early marriage and the small importance attached to girls' education since parents think that when daughters get married they will not provide economic backing to their families in the future. When low economic status forces families to make a choice between the education of girls and boys, most parents give preference to boys' education as they will be responsible for contributions to the income of the families. To promote girls' education, special measures and strategies should be developed to counteract these barriers.
- There is a need for a public education campaign to enhance participation of females in education, social affairs, medicine, as half of the population is female. Community awareness should be raised regarding the importance of education through public media and awareness-raising programs. The communities should be enlightened about the advantages of female education. Women should be encouraged to work outside the house in order to assist themselves economically and engage in social affairs.
- Sometimes women who are educated do not conform to the social values of the society. This infuses a feeling in less-educated people that if they educate their daughters, they will not respect Islamic values. One example: some women who are educated do not dress in a socially acceptable manner. Education is empowering for women and girls and they learn to make their own decision, but this can be a source of fear for those men and communities who believe in male superiority. Communities' perception of women's roles should be changed by promoting positive role models.
- One of the barriers to girls' education is the harassment caused by boys as the girls go to schools. Community support is needed to address this.
- The religious leaders in communities, especially mullahs, are well accepted and understood by the average person, especially in rural areas. The support of mullahs will be vital for the promotion of girls' education. Islamic teaching and the support of clergy can be instrumental in convincing communities, especially conservative ones, to send their girls to school.
- Female education at the primary level should be compulsory and the government should enforce it.
- Lack of schools in villages, especially female schools, is a major hurdle, as well as the lack of female teachers in remote areas of the country. More schools with a girl-friendly environment should be set up.

- Home-based girls' education classes should be established as they are more accessible for the girls. Families are more willing to send their daughters to local, home-based schools as girls do not have to travel long distances.
- The future curriculum should be gender sensitive. Perceptions of careers and jobs based on gender should not be reinforced in the school curricula, rather girls and women should be portrayed as capable and equal to men. For example, the books should not have such stories depicting girls helping mothers and boys going to school. For example, when professions are portrayed, the text will say "Ahmad is a doctor." "Razia is a nurse." "Fatana is washing the dishes." or "Kabeer is playing football." Labor is divided in a negative, sexually discriminatory way, which says a boy has more ability, power and rights to engage in more demanding and skilled activities than a girl. These types of messages should be removed. The future generation can develop better perceptions about women if women and girls are projected as capable and intellectually equal to men.
- Literacy among women and girls should be promoted using the following means:
 - Create mobile family affairs counseling groups that will invite the women to participate. These groups can themselves employ the local women.
 - Seek the help of mullahs in mobilizing support for girls' education
 - Make school obligatory for girls.
 - Prepare audio-visual materials like films on illiteracy.
 - Establish women's handicraft centers in all sub-districts.
- The content of learning materials for women should cover health, environmental information, concise women's rights materials and child-rearing lessons.
- As many girls do not pursue education beyond primary levels, the education that girls receive in lower levels should be relevant to women's lives and useful to them in their future lives.
- Coordination and cooperation should occur between the Ministries of Health, Transport, and Information and Culture to form joint strategies to promote girls' education. For example, clinics are the public places where women and men go, so advocacy for female education should be part of the messages transmitted by health personnel.
- Transportation should be provided to girls who have to commute to schools in order to complete their education. Messages for promotion of girls' education should be written in public areas. Mass media should be harnessed to produce programs through which advocacy for girls' education takes place.
- During the plenary session, one participant pointed out that, in Kabul and Herat, over 50 percent of students are girls. The only provinces noted where girls are not going to school are Ghore and Urozgan. Many teachers in Kabul are women. Discussing girls' education should not leave the impression that Afghanistan has not historically had education for girls, when the country had provided education for girls, even 40 years ago. Mr. Wahidi made the comment that in cities, access to education for girls is not generally a problem. In rural areas, because of a lack of transportation, schools, etc., girls' education is a problem. Another participant offered that during the Taliban regime, 300

schools for girls in remote areas were able to continue running by increasing the teaching time for religious subjects and thus gaining greater parental support.

Preschool Training and Kindergarten

- Sufficient funds should be allocated for kindergartens throughout the nation.
- Short- and long-term programs should be launched to enrich the quality of kindergarten. The process can be accelerated by employing academic professionals and new methods, and by providing educational facilities along with a new system of education.
- There should be professionals who are trained in instructional methods.
- Interesting illustrated books, along with supplementary materials, should be provided for the kindergartens as soon as possible.
- In preschool, children should learn how to hold a pen, how to sit in a chair and basic hygiene.

VII. Closing Comments

- Ms. Lisa Hartenberger of USAID thanked the MOE, CAII and the workshop participants for their energy and dedication. She reminded the audience of the resilience of the education system and the Afghan people in that although over 70 percent of schools were destroyed, 3 million children reported for school – the largest number in Afghanistan’s history. She encouraged all involved to continue making this curriculum development effort a truly democratic process.
- Ms. Karen Gillespie of UNICEF congratulated the MOE’s Department of Compilation and Translation for opening this discussion and bringing it to the group assembled at this workshop. She stressed that teacher training and curriculum development are very closely linked in the education process.
- Dr. Eileen St. George expressed her admiration for the diligence and commitment the participants had demonstrated for the improvement of the curriculum framework. She expressed that this workshop was a result of a collective effort and hoped that future efforts in educational development continue to build on this collaboration.
- Ms. Wranga spoke on behalf of the participants. Her remarks focused on the milestones Afghanistan would like to reach and the pathway to reach them. Ms. Wranga expressed that, if Afghans remain engaged in infighting, this curriculum will not be successful regardless of how much work is done. Ms. Wranga asked that the goal be to raise an Afghan who can defend the dignity, honor and territory of the country, and a generation that has the label of drugs and terrorism lifted from its forehead. Ms. Wranga closed with a suggestion that the MOE also use the talents and expertise of the brilliant Afghans working outside the Ministry that she met through small group discussions at this conference on an advisory committee for curriculum development.
- The final resolution from the participants was read by an NGO representative and contained the following recommendations:
 - The conference should have been entitled: National Workshop for Sharing Perspectives on Curriculum Development.

- The Ministry of Information and Culture should help us to inform the nation about the content of this curriculum.
- Implementation of this new curriculum should begin immediately in the next school year. The Department of Compilation and Translation should produce new books, start using the textbooks in pilot schools, learn from the pilot experiences, improve the materials and then produce a final version.
- The link between books and students is teachers; the MOE needs to conduct workshops for teachers to improve their skills. In addition, children have been affected by over two decades of war; we need to provide training for teachers so that they recognize differences in students using a student-centered approach.
- It is essential to have supplementary teaching materials and audiovisuals. The MOE should seek help from UNICEF, UNESCO, University of Nebraska and other organizations to get these materials.
- The MOE should seek support, technical and other, for implementation of this curriculum. The MOE needs to put together a budget, with help from donors, for books and libraries important in the implementation of this curriculum.
- A sufficient number of preschool/kindergarten facilities needs to be established.
- Children of nomads have been deprived of education for many years and they need access to education.
- Mr. Wahidi, Director of the Department of Compilation and Translation stated that the work style at the MOE is going to change; the group of ten that initiated the work will join the Curriculum Committee. This national curriculum group, led by Deputy Minister of Education Asmati, will take on more responsibilities. The efforts thus far have yielded achievements: schools have been established and an education policy was adopted. Now, syllabi are being drafted and then the books will be developed in accordance with those syllabi. The committee will work with the Department of Teacher Training, which needs to prepare a policy statement about qualifying teachers. The Department of Vocational Education needs to determine how to proceed with training that meets the needs of today and tomorrow. All departments need to think about application of the concept of student-centered learning. The Department of Literacy must map out a plan and figure out how many years it will take to eliminate illiteracy.
- Mr. Wahidi reminded participants that the MOE currently has only a draft framework, not a complete curriculum. A few items have been added, i.e., counseling, vocational courses, foreign languages in primary school, and the division of the second cycle of secondary school into social studies and natural science tracks. When each department has a complete curriculum, then the framework can be called a curriculum. Only then can the policy be implemented. It will not be easy to implement this program, but if all work together, the goals can be achieved.
- In his comments, Deputy Minister Asmati explained that in Paris the MOE and MOHE are currently forming a new UNESCO commission on education in Afghanistan. Mr. Asmati also stated that this curriculum framework is a national

- document representing a new education program for a new society. Only with a good education system and a sound society can the Constitution be implemented effectively.
- Mr. Asmati continued, saying that it is important to keep education separate from politics and that, at the same time, Afghanistan also needs healthy politics based on national unity. The future generation must acknowledge not only its Islamic identity, but also understand the depth and breadth of this belief so that politics are not again imposed from outside the country. The future generation also needs current technology. Islam is a religion of social justice and equality, not just about praying. The country needs good Muslims, who are focused on justice and equality. If Afghanistan has a world-class curriculum, but narrow-minded views, the country will not progress.
 - Mr. Asmati also touched on the importance of training teachers. The MOE must conduct training to strengthen the capacity of Afghanistan's teachers.

VIII. Challenges and Opportunities for Curriculum Reform in Afghanistan

Developing and disseminating a new curriculum for Afghanistan and ensuring its implementation in classrooms is an attainable goal, yet one rife with challenges. Accompanying challenges are not insurmountable given proper planning, resources (human, financial and material), time and commitment, but will most certainly impede progress if disregarded. During this five-day workshop, many of the challenges addressed below were identified or alluded to, while others are foreseen based on experiences of other countries that have undergone similar reforms.

A. Challenges

Contemporary Educational Concepts, Theory and Practice

The curriculum framework, developed by the MOE's Department of Compilation and Translation, is a comprehensive document that addresses a healthy array of pertinent policy and implementation issues. Encompassed within the framework are several contemporary educational concepts, including student-centered learning, lifelong learning, life skills development, integrated learning, integrated and spiral curriculum, participatory processes, gender equity, etc. One of the primary challenges to overcome is the initial lack of understanding of the breadth and depth of these concepts and how to operationalize concepts through practical application of the curriculum. These concepts must not only be understood but internalized by those implementing the new curriculum if they are to fulfill their roles in the development and diffusion of the curriculum, which will result in the subsequent adoption of this curriculum by other educational practitioners.

Models of Intervention

Cascade models of diffusion have typically not produced desired sustainable impact in advancing the level of understanding for such concepts and more significantly promoting behavioral change in educational practices. Strategies that incorporate training, practical application, observation and monitoring of desired knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors over a span of time are more effective as they allow reinforcement and

realignment of the desired set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, a series of training programs with on-the-job follow-up would be far more desirable than one-time trainings for the various populations of implementers. This approach, offering a continuum of interventions, allows for a complete learning cycle of introduction, application, reflection, internalization, feedback and revision to enable ongoing development and progress.

Timeline for Curriculum Reform

Evaluations conducted on curriculum reform efforts in developing countries have repeatedly attributed poor quality of reform to the unrealistic timeframes set for reform implementation and achievement. Educational reform efforts, particularly curriculum development and textbook development initiatives, seldom, if ever, allot sufficient time for an appropriate process of development, formative evaluation and revision or for providing necessary inputs, such as capacity training, provision of materials, and creation of systems and infrastructure that incorporate necessary quality control measures. Unfortunately, reform efforts continue to prioritize *pace* over *quality*. The first round of syllabi and textbook development, in reality, become the capacity-building exercise for undertrained curriculum developers. This round then inspires a second cycle of materials development to actually apply all that has been learned to effectively represent policy concepts in the new curriculum materials and guides. Curriculum reform is an evolutionary process, not one that is finite and complete once the first round of new instructional materials are developed and present within the schools.

Curriculum Developers' Role in the Classroom

Curriculum developers in developing countries often do not realize the potential impact they could and should have on the classroom. Influences on and responsibilities for teacher behavior in the classroom are commonly attributed to those individuals and institutions responsible for teacher training. In the development context, research has informed us that textbooks are most often the driving force in the classroom, as teachers rely on them extensively and perhaps even exclusively. Research also tells us that a quality textbook can help compensate for an undertrained teacher. Curriculum developers creating these textbooks therefore influence the classroom for better or worse. In recognizing the potential impact they have on the classroom, curriculum developers can better serve the classroom through creating quality, responsive materials that stimulate the learning environment and teacher behavior.

Development of Standards/Competencies

There have been efforts in Afghanistan to develop standards or competencies to guide a curriculum. Pursuing standards development becomes increasingly important, given the desire of the MOE to respond to the high numbers of children currently out of school, overaged students, and those displaced and marginalized. Additionally, solutions developed to address these populations are often through nonformal education programs. The development of achievement standards to guide the teaching-learning process provides a nexus between the nonformal and formal education programs and results in an increasingly responsive and comprehensive national education program, satisfying the needs of a broader array of student populations.

These standards guide the evaluation of students and provide clear and valid grade equivalency measures on which to base the promotion process. In the absence of standards, finding points of intersection between the curriculum and learner achievement in the formal and nonformal systems would be challenging. Presently, Afghanistan is attempting to measure the capacity of returning students in order to place them within the Afghan school system. Measuring these students against a set of recognized standards would increase the validity and transparency of this process.

Developing standards to guide the new curriculum of Afghanistan will require training and on-the-job guidance as well as resource materials that provide examples of how to write standards, the gradual progression of sub-skills towards primary skill achievement, how standards become actualized through instructional materials and the manner in which the achievement of standards can be measured in the classroom. A useful exercise to initiate standards development would be a comparative study of national, regional and international standards enabling Afghan educators to assess their expectations for performance of students with the expectations within their region and other parts of the world, helping them gauge themselves in light of a broader context.

Syllabi Development

Syllabi guide the development of instructional materials and annual plans for teachers. As a guide linked to classroom activity, it is critical that syllabi be developed with care and attention to the new aspects of the curriculum framework. The syllabi should be based upon the standards set for each content area and grade level, including areas of integrated knowledge and skills, such as peace education, health and livelihood, equity issues, etc. The syllabi should also provide users with guidance on methods that adhere to the teaching-learning processes advocated in the new policy.

Common challenges observed in other countries with syllabi development include:

- A tendency to overload the syllabi.
- Inadequate time afforded to the development of sub-skills and knowledge that are necessary to learn and perform complex skills and tasks.
- Unevenly paced development and progression of sub-skills of knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- Inconsistency between or absence of linkages between the syllabi and desired learning standards.
- Inability to balance curriculum with a healthy combination of necessary subjects, topics, life-related skills, etc.
- The need for developing textbooks, from the syllabi, that guide learning and apply the core policy principles, such as relevance of content, learner centeredness, problem solving and discovery orientation, gender equity, etc.
- The complexity of integrating new subjects into the curriculum was specifically noted during the workshop. For example, Islamic studies and/or foreign languages were suggested to absorb many content areas, such as life skills, health education, equity, peace and unity, etc. A method for achieving this integration must be worked out.

Textbooks

A major challenge to the effective development of textbooks is the lack of understanding by textbook developers of the role textbooks can play in the classroom and the manner in which they need to assist the teacher in adopting the new curriculum reform. By following new textbooks, teachers believe that they are implementing the new curriculum. For teachers to be able to implement the new curriculum, the textbooks would then have to guide teachers not only through content, but through methods that put the new curriculum framework into practice.

Textbooks need to be based on the standards and follow a clear, comprehensive and well-paced set of learning objectives. Textbooks need to be appealing by stimulating learner interest, motivating students to learn by arousing their natural curiosity and desire to reason. Textbooks, promoting student-centered learning, aid teachers in engaging learners in higher-order thinking and offer options for classroom assessment activities that let teachers and learners know what has been learned and what remediation is required.

Assessment

Assessing learner achievement is one of the most challenging aspects of education. Most educators in developing countries think of national examinations when the term assessment is used. Considerable time and effort has been spent in numerous countries undergoing educational reform on developing teachers' ability to assess learners in the classroom and using assessment as a guide to teaching and remediation of learners. Coupled with enhancing teachers' understanding for assessment as a tool in measuring learner achievement, there is a need to enhance teacher understanding that learner performance is a measure of their achievement as a teacher.

When providing instruction, teachers should have a clear idea of the expected outcomes for learner achievement so that they can adequately and fairly assess learner accomplishments. Identifying learner outcomes is the destination point for which the teachers should aim to reach through classroom instructional activities. Assessment as well as instructional activities should be guided by the standards set through the syllabi and the instructional materials and reflect achievement of not only sub-skills but the higher-level complex skills. Assessment and remediation should be a continuous and integral part of the teaching and learning process.

Teacher Training Programs

Since curriculum development for primary and secondary education and teacher training for these cycles are the responsibility of different ministries within Afghanistan it will be critical to establish close communication so that teacher training programs reinforce the new curriculum framework and enable teachers to develop their capacity to actualize the new framework in the classroom. Teachers are required to understand the new methods, content and principles that the framework supports and how to effectively utilize instructional materials toward having a positive impact on learner achievement. Classroom performance is not to be about teacher behavior, but about learner

achievement. Teacher behavior is an input to a learner achievement ‘end’; teacher behavior is never an ‘end’ unto itself.

B. Opportunity of Today

Afghanistan has short-term solutions that can provide relief to the advancement of education as longer-term solutions are being developed and implemented. However, settling on short-term solutions and foregoing long-term planning would be to the detriment of the overall achievements of the educational reform. Within Afghanistan, textbooks, teachers and classrooms exist and, while in short supply and limited quality, there is enough to render the system functional at a very minimal level. Parents and communities are growing in their support of schooling for their children. International donors are available to lend the technical, financial and resource assistance.

Textbooks exist that can be used in the interim while new, appropriate, better-quality textbooks that represent the new curriculum content, methods and goals are developed. As these textbooks have not yet begun to be developed, there is still time to conduct several critical sets of activities, namely: engage the various levels of implementers in rigorous training on the new curriculum framework, its concepts and principles; acquire long-term technical assistance for the MOE for the curriculum development initiative; and develop standards upon which the syllabi and subsequent materials are to be based, prior to their development.

Afghanistan has the benefit of educators with valuable experience in implementing educational programs, as well as in providing instruction in classrooms. Participatory processes have begun and should continue to grow to promote collaboration between the private and public sectors, fostering a collective responsibility toward providing educational opportunities equally to the people of Afghanistan. While experienced educators do currently reside in the country, the MOE can provide further incentives to entice exiled Afghan educators back home. Teacher training institutions, with the help of donor agencies and regional support, can build on the experiences of teachers teaching with NGOs, in refugee communities or at home in public institutions; develop both pre-service and in-service programs based on the new curriculum framework; enhance outreach to teachers already in the schools through mass-media measures; and support these initiatives for in-service teachers by establishing teacher-to-teacher programs utilizing and diffusing existing knowledge and experience of teachers. Mass-media efforts could also assist with disseminating educational messages to parents advocating for education of all Afghan children and for responding to the significant changes in the new educational policy.

Careful planning on the part of the MOE and in collaboration with donors can bring about a comprehensive development strategy with sufficient resources to provide necessary inputs and systems. These inputs should come in multiple phases of the curriculum reform process and extend across a timeline allowing for internalization of policy concepts, and an understanding for how to operationalize them. The timeline must also allow for building system infrastructure from the MOE to the classroom to support development, implementation and dissemination of Afghanistan’s new education reform.

**FINAL REPORT:
SHARING PERSPECTIVES ON CURRICULUM
DEVELOPMENT IN AFGHANISTAN**

ANNEXES

January 24, 2003

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ANNEX A. List of Participants

Sharing Perspectives on
Curriculum Development in Afghanistan
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113	Ahmadzai	Zamarai	Mr.			Education Manager	Norwegian Afghanistan Committee	NGO
114	Nassiri	Najibullah	Mr.			LEP Officer	Save the Children	NGO
115	Schorn	Frank	Mr.			Consultant	Save the Children	NGO
116	Hadi	Fafima	Ms.			Teacher	Maryam Lycee	TEACHER
117	Khaleki	GhulamNaqshband	Mr.			Teacher	Markaz Science	TEACHER
118		Hasibullah			حسب الله	Teacher		TEACHER
119	Naeemi	Maliha	Ms.			Teacher	Chahar Kalaye Wazir Abad	TEACHER
120	Wahidi	Masoma	Ms.		مصحومه	Teacher	Lamai Shahed School	TEACHER
121	Sharif	Najiba	Ms.			Teacher	Al Fatha Lycee	TEACHER
122	Mohammed O	Parwin	Ms.			Teacher	Kala Waheed Lycee	TEACHER
123		Mary	Ms.				Bakhtar Information Agency	MEDIA
124	Saboor	Abdul	Mr.			Program Assistant	Afghan Kart Company	STAFF
125	St. George	Eileen	Dr.			Senior Associate	Creative Associates International	STAFF
126	Anis	Katy	Ms.			Program Associate	Creative Associates International	STAFF
127	Hartenberger	Lisa	Ms.				USAID	STAFF
128	Mount-Cors	MaryFaith	Ms.			Program Associate	Creative Associates International	STAFF
129	Boomershine	Perry	Dr.			Chief of Party	Creative Associates International	STAFF
130	Weera	Siddiq	Dr.			Senior Country Advisor	Creative Associates International	STAFF
131	Ghauri	Victoria	Ms.			Conference Program Mana	Creative Associates International	STAFF
132	Waisi	Abdul Jalil	Mr.			Rapporteur	Kabul University	STAFF
133	Ahmadi	Ahmed Javed	Mr.			Interpreter	n/a	STAFF
134	Shindandi	Amir Mohammed	Mr.			Rapporteur	Kabul University	STAFF
135	Waiez	Mir Zarif	Mr.			Interpreter	n/a	STAFF
136	Waheedi	Mohammed Amin	Mr.			Interpreter	n/a	STAFF
137	Khettab	Mohammed Rafi	Mr.			Translator	n/a	STAFF
138		Razieh	Ms.			Interpreter	UNICEF	STAFF
139								
140								
141								
142								
143								

ANNEX B. Workshop Invitation

*The Ministry of Education cordially invites you to
participate in a workshop on:*



***Sharing Perspectives on
Curriculum Development in
Afghanistan***

***Venue: At the Intercontinental Hotel
Date: December 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 of 2002***

***Note: Registration of participants will begin at
8:00 am on December 10***

وزارت معارف از جناب

صمیمانه دعوت به عمل می‌آورد تا به

**ورکشاپ نظرخواهی
پیرامون نصاب تعلیمی
جدید معارف افغانستان**

که قرار است ساعت 9 قبل از ظهر روز سه شنبه
19 قوس در تالار هتل انتر کانتیننتال دایر گردد
تشریف آورده ممنون سازید

نوت: ثبت نام به ساعت (8) صبح روز سه شنبه 19 قوس آغاز
میگردد.

ANNEX C. Conference Schedule

Sharing Perspectives on Curriculum Development in Afghanistan
December 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15

	December 10- Day 1	December 11- Day 2	Adj	December 12- Day 3	December 13	December 14- Day 4	December 15- Day 5
8:00	REGISTRATION		8:00		No		
9:00	Opening	Plenary: Guiding Questions for Curriculum Reform.	8:30	Small Group:	Meeting	Plenary: Syllabi and Assessment	Plenary: Small Group Recommendations for Next Steps Continued
9:15	Key Speakers	Small Group Protocol	8:45	Chapters 5 and 8			
9:30	Workshop Objectives		9:00				
9:45	Plenary: Overview of the	Small Group:	9:15				
10:00	Situational Analysis, New	Chapters 1 and 2	9:30			Small Group: Chapters 7,9, 10	
10:15	Policy, Curriculum Reform		9:45				
10:30	Break		10:00				
10:45	Plenary: Participants Sharing	Break	10:15	Break			Plenary: Review Recommendations, Day 1-5
11:00	Experiences in Curriculum Development	Plenary: Small Group Recommendations for Chapter 1 and 2	10:30	Plenary: Small Group Recommendations for Chapter 5 and 8			
11:15			10:45			Break	
11:30	Plenary: Curriculum Reform in the Broader Context		11:00			Plenary: Small Group Recommendations for Chapters 7, 9, 10	Workshop Closing
11:45			11:15				
12:00	Lunch and Prayers	Lunch and Prayers	11:30				
1:00	Plenary: Summary of the New Curriculum	Small Group: Chapter 3, 4 and Chapter 6	11:45				Lunch and Prayers
1:15			12:00	Lunch and Prayers		Lunch and Prayers	
1:30			1:00	Plenary: Sharing Experiences		Plenary: Planning Next Steps	
1:45			1:15	Video and Participant			
2:00			1:30			Small Group: Planning Next Steps	
2:15	Plenary: Q & A		1:45				
2:30	Break	Break	2:00	Break			
2:45	Plenary: Question and Answer Session	Plenary: Small Group Recommendations for Chapter 3,4 and Chapter 6	2:15	Plenary: Small Group Response to Experiences			
3:00	Continues		2:30				
3:15			2:45			Plenary: Small Group Recommendations for Next Steps	
3:30			3:00				
3:45			3:15				
4:00	Workshop Concludes	Workshop Concludes	3:30	Workshop Concludes		Workshop Concludes	
	Homework: Ch. 1,2,3,4,6	Homework: Ch. 5 and 8		Homework: Ch. 7, 9, 10			

ANNEX D. PowerPoint presentation: Evaluating Curriculum

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

- CONTEXT
- CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES
- OPTIONS
- DECISIONS
- RESOURCES
- STRATEGIES
- CONSEQUENCES/IMPLICATIONS
- PROCESS

PROCESS-RELATED QUESTIONS:

- WHO IS DEVELOPING THE CURRICULUM?
- HOW TO ENSURE LEGITIMACY?
- WHAT ARE STRATEGIC GOALS FOR CHANGING/REVIEWING THE CURRICULUM?
- HOW TO ENSURE PARTICIPATORY AND INCLUSIVE MECHANISMS?
- WHAT ARE BEST STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING THE CURRICULUM?
- HOW TO EVALUATE AND REVIEW THE CURRICULUM?

CONTENT-RELATED QUESTIONS:

- WHAT VALUES?
- COMPETENCIES:
 - HOW TO SELECT AND ORGANISE KNOWLEDGE?
 - WHAT SKILLS?
 - WHAT ATTITUDES?
- LEARNING:
 - HOW TO ASSESS LEARNING OUTCOMES?
 - HOW TO FOSTER GOOD LEARNING?

CURRICULUM EVALUATION


IS THE CURRICULUM:

- LEARNER-FRIENDLY?
- CHALLENGING?
- VALUE-ORIENTED?
- UPDATED?
- COMPATIBLE WITH INTERNATIONAL TRENDS?
- BALANCED?
- FLEXIBLE?
- FITTING REAL NEEDS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE?
- DENSE?
- FACILITATING PROGRESSIVE ASSESSMENT?
- PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DEVELOPMENT?


CURRICULUM 'SQUARE'


DENSE	SUBJECT-ORIENTED	COMPATIBLE	CHALLENGING
DEMANDING	PROMOTS INTEGRATED LEARNING	UPDATED	ADDRESSES REAL NEEDS
LOADED	PROMOTS HOLISTIC LEARNING	FLEXIBLE	ACCESSIBLE
INPUT-ORIENTED	PROMOTS HIGHER-LEVEL SKILLS	OUTCOMES-ORIENTED	LEARNER-FRIENDLY

ANNEX E. PowerPoint presentation: Syllabi and Assessment





What is the relationship between the syllabi and assessment?

- 
- both should be based on desired learner outcomes
 - both should include intermediate steps to a comprehensive achievement outcome
 - both should allow for the development of skills through an acquisition of sub-skills
 - the two should be coordinated so that students are guided and measured according to a common set of goals




Assessments are administered often while students are at the end of a learning task, but where do assessments fall in the process of planning a lesson?

- 
- FIRST!!!
 - To know what methods to use to achieve a goal one must know the goal
 - In this case the goal is the learner outcome



If you are planning a trip what do you think of first?

- 
- How to get there?
 - What to pack, how to pack, when to pack?
 - What it will cost?...
 - NO!
 - The first question is:
 - Where are you going?
 - You must plan learning outcomes to know how to get there and identify that you have arrived!

What does relevance of curriculum mean?

- The curriculum recognizes context and conditions of students daily lives.
- The curriculum fosters the development of knowledge and skills students can use within their homes and communities.
- The students can relate concepts with practical experiences and relate practical experiences back to a concept..
- Even if they drop out early students will have learned applicable skills.

What is learner centeredness?

- Acknowledgement that students come to the classroom with knowledge and skills.
- Understanding that students come to the classroom with the ability to think and reason.
- Acceptance that students have individual interests and talents that need to be fed.
- Willingness to motivate students and let them explore learning concepts.

- Openness as a teacher to also learn in the process of teaching – not assuming you always have the one and only right answer.
- Giving learners parameters (NOT free reign) and guiding them with their learning goals in mind.

What is the role of curriculum developers in promoting the implementation of the new curriculum in the classroom and influencing teacher behavior?

Research tells us that ...


- a primary influence of classroom activity in the context of developing countries is the textbook.
- That under-trained teachers, rely almost exclusively on the textbook.
- That well written textbooks that guides instruction can compensate for under-qualified teachers in terms of learner achievement.

ANNEX F. PowerPoint presentation: Summary of Feedback

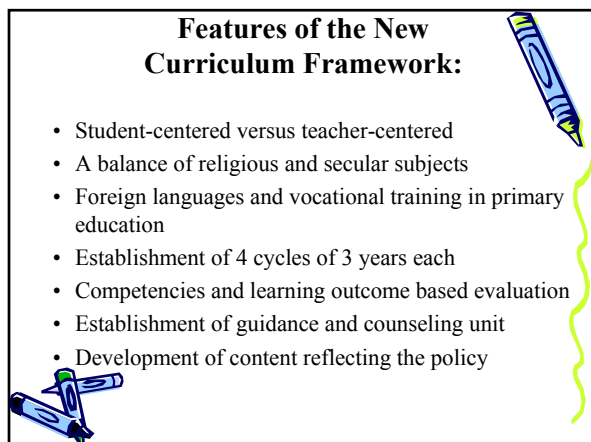


Sharing Perspectives on Curriculum Development in Afghanistan

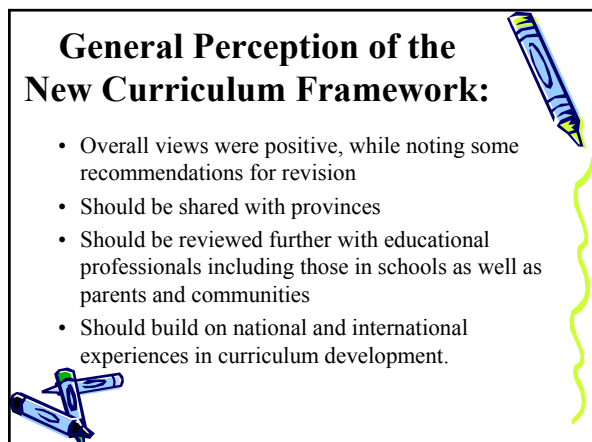
Goal of Education:

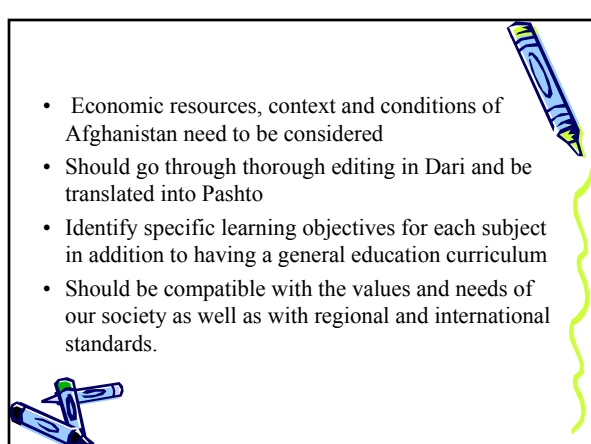
- As stated by Minister Qanooni, the overall goal of education is to bring up a generation of Afghans who will be good Muslims, patriotic and unified across ethnic and religious lines, progressive and respectful of human rights and cooperative members of the world community.
- 

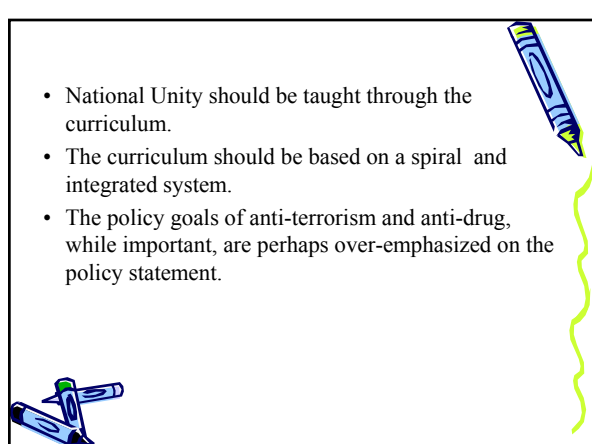
Features of the New Curriculum Framework:

- Student-centered versus teacher-centered
 - A balance of religious and secular subjects
 - Foreign languages and vocational training in primary education
 - Establishment of 4 cycles of 3 years each
 - Competencies and learning outcome based evaluation
 - Establishment of guidance and counseling unit
 - Development of content reflecting the policy
- 

General Perception of the New Curriculum Framework:

- Overall views were positive, while noting some recommendations for revision
 - Should be shared with provinces
 - Should be reviewed further with educational professionals including those in schools as well as parents and communities
 - Should build on national and international experiences in curriculum development.
- 

- Economic resources, context and conditions of Afghanistan need to be considered
 - Should go through thorough editing in Dari and be translated into Pashto
 - Identify specific learning objectives for each subject in addition to having a general education curriculum
 - Should be compatible with the values and needs of our society as well as with regional and international standards.
- 

- National Unity should be taught through the curriculum.
 - The curriculum should be based on a spiral and integrated system.
 - The policy goals of anti-terrorism and anti-drug, while important, are perhaps over-emphasized on the policy statement.
- 

Chapter 1: Introduction and 2: Education Policy

- Priorities should include:
 - suitable educational facilities,
 - training teachers,
 - separating education from politics,
 - maintaining an balance in education,
 - observing the rights of children in the education system.
- sufficient emphasis of Islamic studies

- It is important to teach children to respect others and their beliefs and to promote moral and social responsibility.
- Recognition that Curriculum Development is a dynamic and goals and processes change as society changes
- Political changes should not affect development of an education system.
- Students should be at the center of teaching and learning and motivated to learn.
- Build capacity of teachers and improve instructional materials

- Strongly promote life-long learning to lead the students toward self-sufficiency.
- NGOs should work under the guidance and the umbrella of the MOE.
- Further discussion is needed on mother tongue languages as language of instruction, especially for early primary
- Design curriculum for disabled, including the physically handicapped and the deaf/hard of hearing, under the purview of a vocational or technical department.
- Recommended swift implementation (CAUTION! Research shows that too swift may mean low quality.)

Chapter 3: General Objectives and 4: Educational System and Cycle Objectives

- Suggested categories for organizing curriculum goals:
 - scientific and learning goals
 - dynamic and artistic goals
 - psychological goals
- The teaching of foreign languages should be reconsidered with student class load in mind as well as contemporary language acquisition strategies and research.

- High school may be too early to divide students into tracks.
- Education on good citizenship should be added.
- This cycle should also build on the cycle that precedes it; a focus on incremental development of skills is important.
- Curriculum should be relevant and applicable to students' daily lives.
- The goals section should also include vocational and technical studies.
- In case of need, primary schools can be coeducational, middle schools and high schools should be single sex.

Chapter 5: Literacy Programmes

- Goal should be the complete eradication of illiteracy.
- Develop an accreditation system to integrate literacy program students into the formal schooling system.
- Promote literacy through media campaigns using television, radios, newspaper and clergy to attract public support.

- Literacy courses can be held in mosques (Sunni), Shiite mosques, home schools, and mobile libraries, etc. and supported through a continuing task force.
- Literacy programs can be integrated with agriculture and livestock programs, vocational programs, maternal and child health care programs, programs in family-life, customs and practices of the society..
- Teaching materials should be developed on the basis of the learner's age, capacity and occupation.
- Draft literacy program text and contents from the general education system so linkages between systems can be established.
- Literacy programs should be developed for the handicap.
- Librarians need to be trained.

Chapter 6: Study Plan

- A teacher should have an organized and achievable lesson plan for the students.
- New policy issues, such as human rights, anti-terrorism and anti-drug awareness, promotion of peace and national unity, health education can be incorporated into social studies, Islamic studies, languages or ethics.
- Physical Education, Fine Arts and Music should be given more attention.

- Build in the use of children's literature to teach reading.
- Computers should be part of the curriculum.
- Further discussion is needed on:
 - The number of hours appropriate for Arabic studies.
 - The number of hours of theology across the grade levels.
 - The number of hours and classes in a school day.
 - The number of hours of science and physics
 - The grade levels including drawing and calligraphy

- In the lower secondary cycle, agriculture and home economics should be included.
- In upper secondary cycle general psychology should be taught.
- School schedules must take into account the need for breaks or recesses.
- Kindergarten curriculum and programs need to be incorporated into the Ministry of Education.

Chapter 7: Syllabi

- Consider logical scope, sequence and steps for skill development
- Develop teacher capacity in content and methods to teach according to syllabi
- Develop teacher understanding for appropriate student age and level capacities
- Acquire syllabi samples from other countries in the region

- Review resource materials critically before adopting
- Establish an art department at the MOE to help with illustrations for materials
- Objectives should guide the syllabi development and reflect societal needs
- Syllabi should highlight use of relevant practical exercises, especially for vocational

Chapter 8: Learning and Teaching Strategies

- The curriculum should facilitate the development of students' creative and analytical thinking skills.
- The classroom should be learner centered with the teacher serving as a facilitator, helper and guide, enabling students to participate and be motivated.
- Professional, experienced and sympathetic teachers are needed to implement the strategy, special attention should be paid to training teachers.
- Teachers should not use corporal punishment.

- It is important to consider setting up schools near the residence of students, especially girls.
- Flexible requirements need to be developed in terms of qualifications for female teachers, especially in rural schools.
- Added strategies, resources and capacity building efforts may be needed in the rural areas given the current context and situation.
- Parent and community participation in the learning and teaching process is necessary to improve
 - education for girls
 - student attendance
 - school performance

- Access to libraries and resources with practical education materials and encouragement for teachers to use them.
- Box libraries/mobile libraries with books and magazines would increase access to information and encourage reading outside the textbook and reading independently.
- Establish departments for training professional teachers in the areas of vocational and technical education.
- Special training for Kindergarten teachers
- Creation of healthy competition through learning contests among students.

Chapter 9: Assessment and Evaluation of Learning Outcomes

- Use learner outcomes (standards and competencies) to guide the syllabi, instructional materials and the teaching and learning process.
- Outcomes map the destination to help determine strategies to reach there.
- Assessments should be a learning experience and be used regularly in the classroom to ensure acquisition of desired learning.
- The teacher should be trained in different types of assessment and examinations.

Chapter 10: Guidance and Counseling

- While the program is being developed schools can identify appropriate teachers to assist students in coping with school and home life.
- Schools can establish committees to help support guidance and counseling.

Policy to Action Statements

- Requests through Donor Assistance:
 - Financial assistance
 - Material and Technological Resources
 - Technical advisors
 - Sample materials
- Encourage the experts and skillful personalities, living abroad in exile, to return and contribute to this process.
- Further in-depth training is necessary to build capacity of curriculum developers, provincial educational officers, teachers, school leadership...

ANNEX G. Guidelines for Group Work

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING IN GROUPS

THE PROCESS

- The goal-- To draw out the opinions of each member.
- Each person's comment is valued.
- No one person dominates the small group.
- ➔ **Result-** The sum of the group's input is richer and fuller than its parts alone.

THE OBJECTIVES

Groups may have different objectives at different times. The objective might be:

- To give feedback on the presentation that was just delivered
- To share experience that would be valuable to the topic at hand
- To brainstorm ideas, methods or solutions
- To achieve consensus on recommendations to present to the general assembly

GROUP ROLES- THE CHAIRPERSON

- Call the meeting to order
- Ensure that there is a facilitator, notetaker and translator (and a flipchart notetaker if needed) and that each is able to complete their responsibilities.
- Remind group of time, especially if discussion strays from main topics.
- Notify group five minutes before conclusion time
- Guide the group back to the main ballroom to report the group outcomes

GROUP ROLES- THE FACILITATOR

- Draw out the opinions of each member
- Ask questions that will promote critical thinking
- Guide the discussion, keeping participants focused on the question at hand
- Try to achieve group consensus on particular issues
- Not lecture, instruct, or dominate the discussion

GROUP ROLES- THE NOTETAKER

- Record the main points made by group members
- Summarize points that should be presented to the main assembly
- If a flipchart is required, one individual should prepare notes on paper and a separate individual should prepare flipchart notes

GROUP ROLES- THE TRANSLATOR

- Translate only what was said using exact words, never inserting own ideas
- If only one person needs translation, translate privately and simultaneously.
- If more than two need translation, translate publicly and consecutively.
- If group disorder hinders translation, ask the chairperson to intervene.

GROUP ROLES- THE PARTICIPANT

- Participate fully in the group discussion, sharing one's ideas without hesitation
- Listen carefully to others' ideas, giving due respect to each member
- Monitor oneself in order not to dominate the discussion or inhibit the participation of others

ANNEX H. Review Questions Used in Small Groups

Review Questions Used in Small Groups

1. Does the framework offer enough guidance for developers of instructional materials and teachers, etc.? Is it comprehensive? Is it coherent? Can it be put into practice in the classroom?
2. Are the pieces of the framework united and do they support each of the goals and objectives in the various chapters?
3. Is the Curriculum Framework providing enough opportunities for applying approaches that are:
 - Learner-centered
 - Realistic
 - Relevant and of interest to learners
 - Age and level appropriate
 - Manageable with the school calendar
 - Focused on learner outcomes
4. In reviewing the document determine:
 - What is valid and valuable in the text?
 - What is missing?
 - What should be changed? (i.e. due to irrelevance or inappropriateness)
 - What should be added?
 - What is unclear?
 - Questions you and your group have in regard to the text.

Chapters 1 and 2: Introduction and Education Policy

First Set of Questions

1. What should the educational priorities be? Rank policy statements in order of priority, specify if any should be particularly a short-term or long-term goal.
2. Can this policy be implemented in Afghanistan now? What challenges would there be?
3. What feedback do you have on the chapter in general? Please refer to the *Review Questions for Curriculum Development* handout.

Chapters 1 and 2: Introduction and Education Policy

Second Set of Questions

1. Does the needs assessment address the most important challenges to improving education in Afghanistan? Explain.
2. Does the policy sufficiently respond to national educational needs based on the present context?
3. What feedback do you have on the chapter as it is written? Please refer to the curriculum review questions handout.

Chapters 3 and 4: General Objectives and Structure of the Education System/Objectives for Each Cycle

1. Compare the general objectives and the policy statement. Do all of the ideas in the policy statement have a general objective? Are any missing or redundant?
2. Are the cycle objectives appropriately assigned? If not, in what ways would you modify the objectives set for each cycle?
3. What feedback do you have on the chapter in general? Please refer to the *Review Questions for Curriculum Development* handout.

Chapter 5: Literacy Programs

1. What is considered literacy?
2. What populations are targeted by literacy programs?
 - 2.a. What is the best way to meet the needs of these people?
 - 2.b. What should the content be to respond to the multiple needs of the people in the programs?
3. Are there different programs for different needs? (i.e., functional and/or equivalency literacy models)
4. How can these programs help enable reintegration into the formal system?
5. How can an education system enable reintegration of students into literacy programs?
6. In what ways can Afghanistan advocate and campaign for literacy?

Chapter 6: Study Plan

1. Given the amount of time children spend in school, how can subjects be given adequate time? Do you think the allocated time in the curriculum framework is adequate to implement the curriculum in the real school setting, even when shift systems are applied? Do you think the subjects and time allotted for each subject in each grade are appropriate?
2. Compare the policy statement, general objectives and the study plan. Is there time within the study plan to address the issues in the policy statement?
3. In what subject areas would you address various policy issues? Issues within the policy include: cultivating moral virtues, living together peacefully, accepting diversity, equity in access, motivating and relevant to children's needs, attention to people with special needs, learner-friendly learning and teaching methodologies, healthy life styles, etc.
4. What feedback do you have on the chapter in general? Please refer to the *Review Questions for Curriculum Development* handout.

Chapter 8: Learning and Teaching Strategies

1. Do you agree with these teaching-learning strategies and the role of the teacher? What would you modify?

2. How are the teaching and learning strategies to become the practiced curriculum in the classroom?
3. Which of the strategies do you think will be easy to implement in classrooms now? Which will be more difficult? Explain why.
4. What kind of training or other inputs do you think will be needed in order to implement these strategies in the classroom?
5. What feedback do you have on the chapter in general? Please refer to the *Review Questions for Curriculum Development* handout.

Chapter 7 and 10: Syllabi, and Counseling and Guidance

1. What information should be presented in the syllabus?
2. How can teaching and learning strategies be considered when drafting syllabi so these eventually transfer to the instructional materials development phase?
3. In what ways can the other policy goals, addressed during the study guide session, be incorporated into the subject areas?
4. While it takes time to set up a formal guidance and counseling service in schools, in what ways could guidance and counseling needs begin to be incorporated into the schools?
5. What kinds of guidance and counseling needs will need to be addressed?
6. What feedback do you have on the chapters in general? Please refer to the *Review Questions for Curriculum Development* handout

Chapter 9: Assessment and Evaluation of Learning Outcomes

1. Do you think the four proposed activities for improving quality of assessment are needed improvements, relevant suggestions, and possible to apply? (These are the four bulleted points in the section following the statement, “In order to enhance the quality of assessment and evaluation tools and procedures in Afghanistan, the following important aspects should be considered.”)
2. What are the main challenges/problems with the current evaluation system? What are 3 key suggestions for its improvement?
3. How should learning outcomes (competencies) be addressed in the curriculum, syllabus, teaching materials?
4. In what ways can teachers be supported in diversifying their assessment techniques?
5. What feedback do you have on the chapter in general? Please refer to the *Review Questions for Curriculum Development* handout.

Planning Next Steps:

1. What are the needs?
2. Who are the actors/stakeholders? What roles do they have and in which phases of the process?
3. What are short-term vs. long-term strategies, etc?
4. How can we accelerate the process and maintain the quality and integrity of the product?

ANNEX I. Editorial Comments on Selected Chapters

Editorial Comments on Selected Chapters

These comments refer to the Dari version of the curriculum framework.

Chapters 1 and 2

- The words “emotional” and “sympathetic” should be added in paragraph one.
- In the first paragraph, 3rd line after learning of skills, how to use their skills should be added.
- In the 3rd line of the first paragraph the word “national” should be added next to the word international.
- Joining of the 4th and 5th articles and omitting of some words in the 4th article is preferred
- In the first item of educational policy on page nine after the phrase “national unity”, the sentence “with the vision of humane and human love” is suggested to be added.
- In the first item of chapter two on page nine after the phrase “education and training of countries”, the phrase “regional” should be added.
- After item thirteen, in line three of the main outcomes of page nine, the phrase “human” should be replaced with the sentence “students as individuals”.
- Replace the phrase “being grateful” to “being satisfied” on page 5, line 6.
- The phrase “high level of literacy” should be replaced by the “entire eradication of illiteracy”.
- Articles 2 and 6 should be combined. There should be only one new, central curriculum.

Chapters 3 and 4

- In number one, “human values” should be added to the phrase “Islamic values”.
- In number one, beside the phrase “sound international fine arts” the phrase “agreeable with our national and cultural traditions and customs”.
- In number one, beside the phrase “Islamic values” the phrase “civilized values” should be added.
- In number six, the phrase “national languages” should be added.
- In chapter four, page 14, instead of the word “challenge”, we should use a different word.
- On page 14, “horizon of students” should be replaced with “vision of the students”.
- In number three, instead of belief in God and religious values, the following phrase is proposed: “on the basis of *Taqwa* (piety) and virtuosity”.
- Under the objectives of scientific learning, it would be better to include the word “social” along with science and technology.

Chapter 5

- In the line at the bottom of the first paragraph with regard to the general aims of literacy, instead of stimulation for the maintaining of peace, stimulator for the maintaining peace, security, national unity, fight/ struggle against terrorism on national, regional, and international level should be fostered.

- In addition, in the title of the third page of literacy section, the word “situation” should be added.
- The fourth paragraph of page four is incomplete. It is hoped that it will be completed.

Chapter 8

- In the first paragraph, in the fourth line after the word “according to” the words “talent and interest” should be added.
- In the title after the word strategy the “ies” should be removed. The word strategy should be used in the singular form.
- The learning environment part, in the first paragraph after the word laboratory these words should be added: audiovisual rooms, conferences and arts.

ANNEX J: Additional Content Area Feedback

Additional Content Area Feedback

Arts

- The content of this chapter on arts is endorsed by the team.
- The team believes that arts provide an outlet for children's creativity, supports psychosocial well-being, fosters the development of motor skills and is the basis for all other learning. The arts have been pushed down by the Taliban and it will require special effort to revive interest and respect for arts.
- The group defined art as: acquiring creative skills and knowledge in all areas of arts such as painting, calligraphy, design, wood carving, music, theater, etc.
- Arts should be taught from grade one to nine.
- Artistic mediums such as drawing, role plays, singing, etc. can be used as effective student-centered methods for teaching other subjects. The arts can be integrated into other subjects and can be used as a vehicle for the transfer of knowledge and skills in other subjects (e.g., stories in Dari subjects can be role-played, drawing can be practiced in biology and physics subjects, etc.)
- Art teachers need to be trained in their subject area as professionals. Specialists in one area should have some knowledge of other artistic mediums as well.
- Trained teachers should actively nurture latent talents in children and should support children to develop these talents and grow into artists. Teachers of all subjects should provide opportunities for the students to express their interest and talent in arts.
- Art departments should be set up in schools to promote and support artistic activities in the schools.
- Art competitions should be conducted within and between schools. For instance, a drawing competition could be launched annually in all the schools
- To develop students' understanding and retention of text, different forms of arts should be used to portray concepts.
- A Department of Arts should be established within the Ministry of Education and at the provincial level, to actively promote and supervise art activities in schools in each province.
- Arts require special facilities and materials, therefore teaching aids for arts and materials as well as specialized training should be provided and put at the disposal of schools and teachers.
- To finalize the curriculum, seeking the views and opinion of a broader team of education professionals is a must.
- One member described the link between sports and children's health, saying a physically sound body is far more capable intellectually. Sports should be encouraged in schools to develop sound bodies.

Biology/Chemistry

- In the second cycle of primary education, adequate information should be provided on smallpox and the vaccination of other childhood deadly diseases.
- In the beginning of each chapter, the learning goals should be added.
- The illustrations in the textbooks should be in color.

- In the science curriculum for grade six (6), the digestive system should be presented first, then, the cardiovascular system.
- In the grade nine biology curriculum, the digestive system should be presented first, followed by the cardiovascular system, then the respiratory system etc.
- The details of the chemistry syllabi are approved by the group members.

Dari Language

- Policy and objectives should be clearly stated in the Dari section of the document.
- All teachers should provide charts and visual materials to effectively illustrate the material being taught.
- Teachers of Dari and Pashto Literature, History, Geography, Religious Studies and Social Studies can serve as counselors, when trained counselors are not available.
- The text should state that students need to be provided guidance to choose a field based on their interests and desire.
- School administration needs to be strengthened.

Mathematics

- The mathematics syllabus appears to be comprehensible and age-appropriate.
- Mathematical sets should be inserted in the text.
- The syllabus should cover multiplying numbers to various powers, e.g., 5^2 , 5^3 , etc.

Pashto Language

- Syllabi from grade one to six are culturally appropriate and are accepted by the group.
- Each school should conduct meetings and set up a committee to select a teacher to become a guidance counselor. This teacher should be highly educated, highly qualified and should have necessary experience for counseling. The teacher should be able to assist students in solving their personal problems.

Physics

- The text should specify that teachers should use natural and locally available resources, whenever possible. Lessons should be taught in laboratories, if those resources are available.
- Real-life, practical application and hands-on consequences should be a part of each lesson.
- In 11th and 12th grade textbooks, information technology material should be included, such as information on computer hardware, software and the history of technological development.
- Content experts and professionally trained teachers are necessary for successful implementation of the physics curriculum.
- Solid economic support should be secured for teachers, and learning materials and supplements should be supplied to students.

- Equity and justice should be observed in scoring and evaluation of student performance.
- To assist teacher development, teaching manuals, seminars for teachers and consultants are necessary.

Preschool and Literacy

- Children should be taught how to behave and how to work together.
- Children should be taught to respect and understand nature.

Religious Studies

- The Qu'ran should be taught two hours per week from grade one through seven.
- Tajweed (phonetic principles of the Qu'ran) should be taught two hours per week from grade eight to nine.
- Other educational materials besides books are needed for religious studies.
- In terms of specific topics in religious studies, the syllabus was approved and the new topics were endorsed as necessary in the curriculum: health, avoidance of bad conduct, teaching abstinence from alcohol and narcotic substances, a focus on justice, peace and altruism, moral principles.
- Illustrations should be included in reading material when needed
- The amount of time for the study of Hadith should increase.
- Arabic should be taught from grade seven to twelve.

Social Studies

- The syllabi should address the needs of the students and society as well as the government.
- Understanding goals and inductive behaviors must be considered in implementing the syllabi.
- In addition to the social studies content included, the curriculum should also cover peace education, human rights, and fighting against narcotic drugs, illiteracy and terrorism.
- A Department of Guidance and Counselling should be established in the Ministry of Education and at the provincial level.
- Opportunities for counseling on occupational and social issues should be provided to students.
- Psychology must be included in the syllabi for the students of 10th, 11th and 12th grades.

Vocational Education

- Participants stated that forty-four educational institutions in agriculture and other vocational fields exist in Afghanistan. These institutions focus on the ability of graduates to perform in a certain skill area by providing opportunities to work in practical situations. The vocational education programs find that written evaluation is not sufficient; research projects and other types of hands-on assessment better test students' abilities.

- A market needs assessment needs to be done to determine what types of skills are in demand in order to work further on the syllabi.
- Training seminars, scholarships, and other professional development activities can be held to strengthen the capacity of teachers. One example could be a three-day workshop for vocational school and university teachers with Afghan and international experts.